

Letter and enclosure from Alexander Graham Bell to Mabel Hubbard Bell, May 24, 1901

Hotel Chelsea, Atlantic City, N. J., May 24, 1901. Dear Mabel: —

I can't allow any more days to slip by without letting you know that we are all alive and well. The nemesis of fate has overtaken me. I grew tired of writing letters to you and sending you copied of everything and NEVER RECEIVING A WORD IN REPLY. Correspondence across the Atlantic is not satisfactory, it takes so long for anything to reach anybody and then for the reply to crawl back to America. I thought, too you would rather hear from me in my own handwriting — on private matters — and you see the result one letter, perhaps two, and that is all. And now I say the nemesis of fate has overtaken me for letters come pouring in from you at the rate of two or three a day! And you haven't a word of reply from me.

Your letters are just splendid — the only trouble about them is that they are not typewritten, so as to reduce the difficulty of reading to a minimum. If these letters were in printed form (typewritten or printed) they would form fascinating reading as interesting as a novel. You certainly have a marvellous faculty of expression. I think I shall have to ask Miss Safford to typewrite them, illustrating by tracings from a map.

What has become of your paper on speech reading? The Bureau is anxious to get it out, but we want the paper in the form that is most satisfactory to you.

It is no use my waiting to send you a letter in my own hand writing, if I wait much longer you will be here before it is sent off 2 I wanted to write to you fully concerning all the reasons that led me to come to Atlantic City instead of going to Baddeck, but I cannot do so now and must wait till you come.

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I would like you to come to New York instead of to Halifax, and then come down here, and let us decide all together where we shall go next. I have been very anxious to have my father with me as much as possible this summer, and also Elsie, and yet not be far from the Census Office.

Do you remember the puzzle of the fox, the goose and the bag of oats? I have not thought it well to take Elsie and Baddeck away from good doctors until you come and decide. My father was about to slip off to Colonial Beach, and it was, of course, out of the question that Elsie could go down there. It was getting too warm in Washington to be pleasant or safe for any of us, and I began to be afraid that I should lose either the fox the goose or the bag of oats!

I came to the conclusion to invite my father and Mrs. Bell, and Elsie and Bert to spend a month with me at Atlantic City. Dr. Sowers said he thought it would be the best thing for Elsie, and — (of course you know now — although your letters show no indication of it — that there was some special reason why I cabled you suggesting that you had better come home and be nearer Elsie.

My father has just come in and we have put him down on a lounge with a cigar in his mouth to watch the operation of dictating. I have taken possession of Bert's study while he is away in Washington for a few days. Elsie's bedroom adjoins and she and Louise Coleman are there now in d i e shabille, reading novels or napping. I will ask my father to dictate a word of greeting to you. He says: —

My dear, dear Mabel: —

I am glad to take this opportunity of sending you a few lines. The pleasure is second only to that which I experience in speaking to yourself. You have been such a great traveler that nothing that I could say would be at all likely to interest you. You will be glad, however, to hear that we are all well and enjoying our short stay at this delightful place.

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We have the sound of the waves in our ears and the sight of the commotion of waters from our windows, and Miss Safford is playing on the instrument of typewriting to my great admiration.

When are we to see you? I hope very soon. We shall be here until the last of this month. — Here Alec interrupts me and says that I have promised to stay a month with him — how we are to reconcile the difference I do not yet know, but at this point I resign the dictation to him.

My father having resigned to me, I shall simply say that we expect to remain here until you come. I want you to be with Elsie here and then decide whether we shall go to Baddeck or elsewhere.

Elsie seems now to be very well, excepting that she looks pale and tired. Bert will be back in a few days. This is enough for one dictation. My father's presence here prevents me from continuing as I desired. Will resume again when he is not present.

Your loving husband Alec. Mrs. A. Graham Bell c/o —

617

1901, May 11

PAID.

Mr. and Mrs. Melville Bell: —

2 round trip tickets at &8.50 \$17.00

2 chairs 2.00

2 trunks expressed \$.75 each 1.50 \$20.50

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Mr. and Mrs. David Bell: —

3 round trip tickets (including man) \$25.50

2 chairs 2.00

2 trunks expressed 1.50 \$29.00

Mrs. Ker: —

1 round trip ticket \$8.50

1 chair 1.00 \$9.50

Mr. and Mrs. Grosvenor: —

3 round trip tickets (inc. Florence) \$25.50

2 chairs 2.00 \$27.50

A. Graham Bell: —

1 round trip ticket \$8.50

Balance on stateroom 5.00

3 pieces baggage (inc. hat box) 2.25 \$15.75

1901, May 11 to May 18.

EXPENSES AT CHELSEA HOTEL.

EXTRAS REGULAR EXPENSE Mr. and Mrs. A. Melville Bell: — Board \$60.00 Mr. and Mrs. Grosvenor: — Board \$60.00 Florence \$15.00 May 14, C. O. D. 4.91 Mr. and Mrs. David Bell: —(& party) Board May 11 to 15 68.00 Suit, C.O.D. 15.00 A.G. BELL Board

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\$30.00 Extra Service, milk &c. 15.55 Coach .75 Wines & and cigars 3.15 Extra meals 2.00
Extra expenses (Telegrams, carriages papers, cash for party) 35.98 B. A. Safford, 2 days
10.45 \$170.79 \$150.00

Total \$150.00

170.79

\$320.79